

IN SIGHT

for Oregon Lawyers

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

25 YEARS OF LAWYERS HELPING LAWYERS

Beginning with career choice and through to retirement, the Oregon Attorney Assistance Program serves Oregon lawyers in all kinds of ways. For more than 25 years, the OAAP has helped lawyers overcome obstacles to their personal and professional health by guiding them to the resources they need, counseling them to resolve the personal crises they are experiencing, and supporting them in recovery and personal health. The OAAP is internationally recognized for the professional quality and experience of our attorney counselors and for the range of services that meets the needs of a diverse Bar. These services include assistance and support related to career choice, recovery, mental health, wellness, career transition, and stress management.

The OAAP is one of the few assistance programs that is completely confidential – with statutes, administrative rules, and ethics rules that protect participants’ names, information, and privacy. As a result, Oregon lawyers can access the OAAP with complete confidence that their names and information will never be disclosed outside of the OAAP. (The only exceptions to this confidentiality are those necessary to avert a serious, imminent threat to the health or safety of the lawyer or another person; to comply with legal obligations such as elder or child abuse reporting; or if the lawyer requests that the information be disclosed.)

Looking back over these 25 years, there are many measures of the OAAP’s success. Over this time span, the OAAP has helped over 10,000 lawyers. Over the last

10 years, the OAAP has provided individual assistance to more than 6,000 lawyers and has answered questions and held workshops, retreats, and CLEs for many thousands more. In 2006, the OAAP provided individual assistance to more than 750 lawyers – over 350 of these lawyers accessed the OAAP for addiction or mental health-related issues. The OAAP’s 2001 study revealed that the malpractice and discipline claim rates of lawyers in recovery is lower than average, and that the malpractice and discipline claim rates for lawyers who suffer from alcoholism is four times higher before recovery than after recovery. It is clear that the services provided by the OAAP reduce malpractice and discipline complaints – a cost savings and public benefit that has a positive result for all Oregon lawyers and for the Bar system as a whole.

The OAAP’s largest positive impact on Oregon lawyers comes in yet another form: Oregon lawyers understand that the OAAP is completely confidential and a safe place to get help of all kinds. It is the lives of colleagues and family members that are saved; the careers that are restored; and the enhanced enjoyment of life that represent the real benefit provided by the OAAP.

When the OAAP provides assistance to a lawyer, its impact reaches beyond that individual. Helping that lawyer also benefits the public by reducing potential damage to the lawyer’s clients – and it improves the lives and well-being of the lawyer’s law partners, co-workers, friends, and family. This positive impact is often

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also felt by the next generation – through the children of the lawyers the OAAP helps. When a lawyer calls the OAAP to let us know that another lawyer may need assistance or support, the lawyer who makes the call is demonstrating professionalism at its best – helping a fellow lawyer.

The OAAP has been successful in doing its work because of the involvement of each of you. We thank you for supporting each other and thereby making this program a great and long-lasting success.

Barbara S. Fishleder
OAAP Executive Director